

California Department of Public Health-Emergency Preparedness Office, Promising Practice Award

On June 23, 2015, the California Department of Public Health-Emergency Preparedness Office awarded Sacramento County Public Health, Health Program Coordinator Hannah Aalborg the 2014-2015 "Promising Practice Award" for her work on developing a Medical Countermeasures (MCM) Plan Template.

As part of the response to a public health emergency, Medical Countermeasures (MCM) may be required to reduce morbidity and mortality in the affected community. MCM (pharmaceuticals, medical supplies, and equipment) are available through many sources, e.g., local caches, neighboring jurisdictions, state caches, commercial vendors, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Strategic National Stockpile (SNS).

The purpose of an MCM plan, appendices, and annexes is to set the framework for the circumstances in which MCM resources can be requested and how they are requested. MCM plans, nationwide, have long been criticized for being cumbersome and difficult to use in emergency response to a bioterror act. Moreover, the plans lacked standardization, making mutual aid and plan reviews challenging, if not impossible.

In order to correct those issues, Hannah Aalborg partnered with Kristen Seatavakin from Marin County, and created a template based upon their extensive knowledge of MCM response activities, best practices available nationwide, and Federal guidance from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The new template is succinct, well organized, and covers all MCM planning issues. Additionally, the template is compliant with FEMA's guidance for emergency operations plans while allowing local health departments the flexibility to adapt the template to local emergency management agencies policies and standards. The MCM Template complies with FEMA's Consolidated Planning Guidance and was reviewed by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

This template is made available to 61 California Public Health Preparedness programs to use in developing their local MCM plans.